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Great Scott!

Astros ace becomes year's first 20-game winner

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mike Scott has been called a lot of things in his career. But never a 20-game winner — until now.

Scott became a 20-game winner for the first time in his 11-year career Thursday, leading the Houston Astros over the Los Angeles Dodgers 11-3 on a day the World Series champions were mathematically eliminated from the National League West race.

"It's something that when you're done playing, you can look back and say, 'Yeah, I had one 20-game season,'" said Scott, 20-8. "But I don't really look at goals during the season. Ever since I've been playing, the only goal I've had is to get into the playoffs and World Series."

Craig Biggio drove in six runs with two homers, including his first grand slam in support of Scott.

Scott, an 18-game winner in 1985 and 1986 — seasons in which he was accused of scuffing baseballs — allowed five hits over seven innings with four strikeouts and two walks. He held the Dodgers without a hit after allowing consecutive doubles to Eddie Murray and Mike Marshall with no outs in the fourth.

"I've had better days," said Scott, who clinched the 1986 West title

with a no-hitter. "But when you get 11 runs, you throw strikes. If it's a close game and you throw the same pitches, you're probably going to get knocked around. But when I get that big of a lead, I just try to throw strikes and let them hit the ball."

"You don't go out there and say 'I'm going to win this many games or that many games, because pitchers don't win games,'" Scott said. "I haven't won 20 games. It takes nine guys out there to win a ballgame. We won 20 games when I was pitching, but I'm not out there striking out 27 guys or hitting the home runs."

Scott's victory made him the majors' first 20-game winner this year and the fourth in Astros' history following Larry Dierker, J.R. Richard and Joe Niekro, who did it twice.

The Dodgers' defeat, coupled with first-place San Francisco's victory, officially ended Los Angeles' hopes of winning another championship. No World Series champion has repeated since the 1977-78 New York Yankees.

Rookie John Wetteland, pitching before a season-low crowd of 13,026, lost his fifth straight decision.

"I was throwing slop," he said. "I wasn't pitching my game. I'm a fast-ball pitcher, but I'm trying to learn

to use different pitchers and let my butt kicked. I'm trying to become a complete pitcher, and I'm taking my lumps. I know I'm going to have bad days, and some worse than that."

Rafael Ramirez scored three runs and broke out of a 4-for-40 slump with four hits, including a two-scoring double in the second inning and an RBI single in the fifth.

The Astros, who totaled 17 hits against five Dodger pitchers, chased Wetteland, 4-8, after 1 2-3 inning. They got six runs and five hits from him in the second, including Biggio's grand slam with two out.

Singles by Glenn Davis, Ken Caminiti and Craig Reynolds pulled the Astros into a 1-all tie and Ramirez double put them ahead for good. Biggio, fighting a 5-for-36 slump when the game began, increased his margin to 8-1 in the fourth with another two-out homer.

Gerald Young, who walked on a 3-2 pitch in front of Biggio's grand slam, capped a three-run fifth with a two-out, two-run double. The Astros scored eight of their runs with two out.

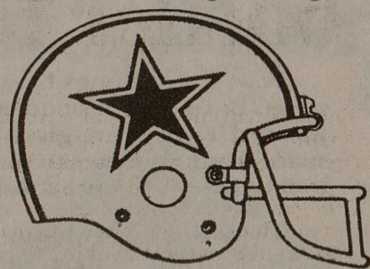
It was Biggio's first multi-homer performance in 170-major league games.

Walker's Cowboys' future unclear

IRVING (AP) — Because of Herschel Walker's uncertain role in the Dallas Cowboys' offense, 1990 could be his last year with the team, says the talented running back's agent.

"We don't know what free agency will be like in two years, but it will certainly be different from what it is today," Johnson said Wednesday.

Jones has expressed interest in extending Walker's contract but Johnson said no more discussions will take place until Walker becomes more comfortable with his role.



Peter Johnson hinted that Walker has no plans to accept owner Jerry Jones' offer to extend Walker's contract. Walker will be 28 when his five-year, \$5 million contract expires after next season.

"Herschel wants to figure out what his role is going to be and we won't even talk about it until then," said Johnson. "I think what Herschel is saying is that he doesn't want to be a fullback, nor does he want to be a wide receiver. He wants to run with the ball."

Walker will play football in his home state for the first time since 1982 when the Dallas Cowboys meet the Atlanta Falcons at noon Sunday

at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. Johnson said the Cowboys proposed a new contract in the spring, an apparent attempt to appease Walker once the franchise signs rookie quarterback Troy Aikman to a much more lucrative pact.

Walker said he won't involve himself in negotiations.

"That's why I pay my agents a lot of money," said Walker. "I haven't even thought about my contract. Dallas is the place I want to finish my career. If they want to talk about a new contract, that's fine with me."

Walker, who will make almost \$2 million in the final two years of the present contract, is entitled to a pay increase because he was the National Football League's second leading rusher and the only Cowboys player in the Pro Bowl last season, said Johnson.

Rice is Wolverine's big worry

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — There appears to be some confusion about who will play whom in college football's early-season game of the year Saturday.

The schedule says second-ranked Michigan will entertain No. 1 Notre Dame.

But, to hear the Wolverines' coaches and players talk, it sounds more like it will be Michigan against Tony Rice.

Here is a sample of what they're saying about the Notre Dame quarterback:

"He's the most dangerous quarterback in the country." — Michigan coach Bo Schembechler.

"He's the threat offensively." — Michigan assistant coach Gary Moeller.

"Tony Rice is the man who makes them click. If Tony Rice does not have a good day, that takes a lot of their offense away." — Michigan free safety Vada Murray.

Rice took over the Fighting Irish quarterback job four games into the 1987 season when Terry Andriak

broke a collarbone. He has been there ever since.

Last season he rushed for 777 yards, the most ever for a Notre Dame quarterback, and passed for 1,176 yards and eight touchdowns.

Rice started the 1988 season leading Notre Dame to a 36-13 victory over Virginia in the Kickapoo Classic. The triumph was so impressive it helped the Irish climb to Michigan in The Associated Press poll.

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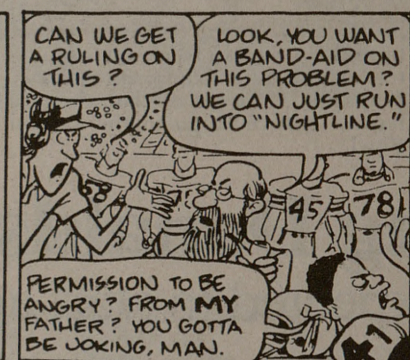
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